

## 26. SCENTING POWER OF BIRDS

With reference to Col. Burton's note on p. 675 of Vol. 50. That well known field naturalist Abel Chapman discusses the subject at length in *Borders and Beyond* pp. 421-439, and again in *Retrospect* pp. 150-155. His opinion is that while the vast majority of birds (even Great Bustard) wholly ignore the safeguard of scenting, wildfowl on the water are keenly alive to the faintest clue from scent, though duck and teal in flight, being above the line of scent, are not affected by it. He considers that 'Geese though equally receptive of scent, are apt to await—with rapt attention—some slight ocular corroboration of a risk already revealed to their olfactory senses', and adds that 'of all the duck tribe, teal (though the most simple) are the most keenly receptive of scent'. As is usual with this careful observer, he supports his statements with a number of examples. My own experience with wildfowl is exactly the same. On many occasions I have from a distance spotted duck or teal within easy range of a tank bund. I have then approached under cover of the bund, and provided the wind was right have always found the birds in the same position. Should however the wind be blowing from me towards the birds, then on topping the bund I have invariably found them out of range, either swimming away or already in flight. A particular instance last year at Gundlupet serves to confirm this. Projecting from the main bund of the tank is a curved ring-bund constructed some years ago when the tank was breached. A narrow path along it affords easy and silent access under cover of tall rushes well out into the tank. On the evening in question I wished to pick up a couple of bird for the pot. A recce under cover of the bund showed about 50 garganey some 100 yards away and close to the ring bund. A silent approach found the birds quite undisturbed and at close range, and a couple of shots gave me what I wanted. It may be noted that on this occasion the wind was blowing from the birds towards me. On the following evening I found the birds in the same place, but the wind had now changed and was blowing from me towards the teal. I had scarcely started on my stalk when they all rose and flew away. They could not possibly have seen me as I was very well hidden and the only explanation of their alarm is that my scent was carried to them.

KALHATTI P.O.,  
NILGIRIS,  
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E. G. PHYTHIAN-ADAMS,  
Lt.-Col., I.A. (Retd.).

27. ADDITIONS TO RECORDED FOOD ITEMS OF THE  
BULL FROG (*RANA TIGRINA*)

In December 1952 my attention was attracted to the much swollen stomach of a frog (*Rana tigrina*) when I was injecting Reeve's India ink, into its heart to facilitate the minute tracing of arteries and veins. On cutting open the stomach, I found to my surprise a Fat-tailed Lizard (*Uromastix*) about 10 inches long and a large head of a spider (*Galeodes agilis* Poc.). The lizard was an adult one and was not affected